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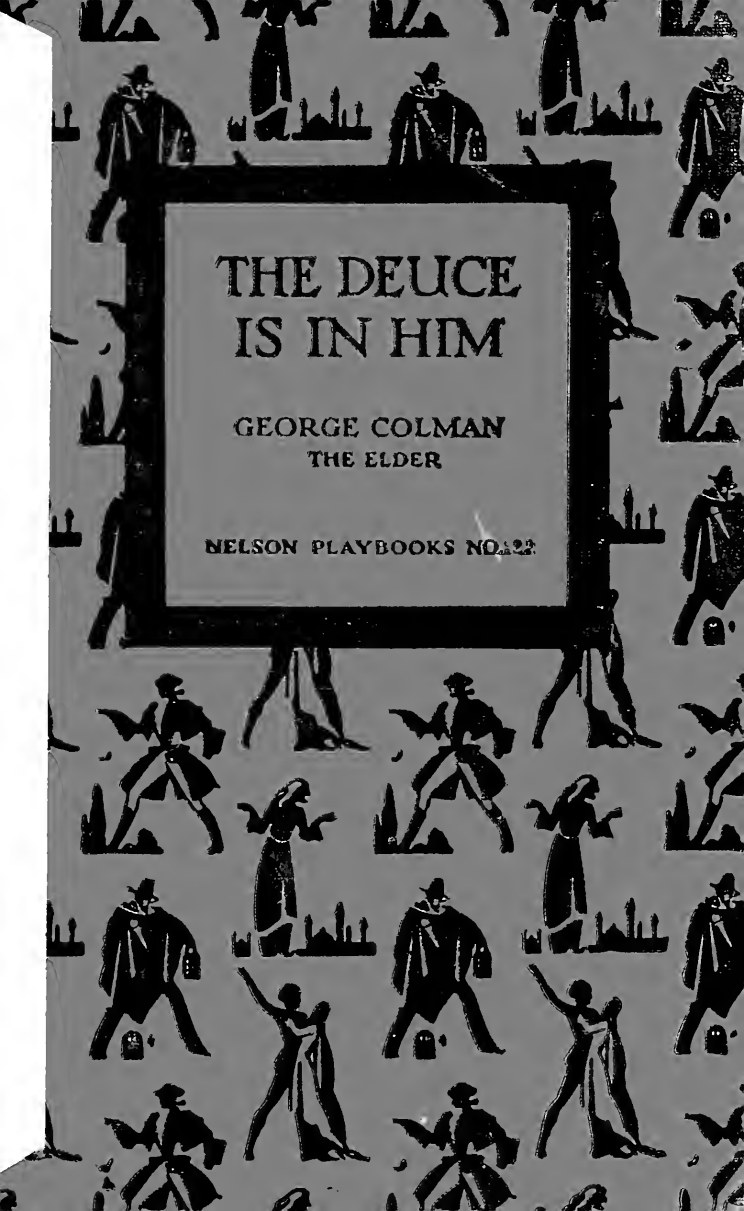
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The deuce is in
him

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THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

GEORGE COLMAN
THE ELDER

NELSON PLAYBOOKS NO. 22

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Edited by JOHN HAMPDEN, M.A.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

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THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

A FARCE IN TWO ACTS

BY

GEORGE COLMAN

THE ELDER

ADAPTED BY

W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON

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INTRODUCTION

WHILE preparing their version of David Garrick's *Miss in her Teens*, which has already been published in this series, the Chiddingfold Players almost necessarily became aware of their author's friend and contemporary dramatist, George Colman. He, like Garrick, was manager of a theatre—first of Covent Garden, and then of the Haymarket—and had an intimate working knowledge of the stage. His most famous play, *The Clandestine Marriage*, which still holds the boards, was written in collaboration with the great David.

In addition to his more important plays, Colman wrote many little after-pieces—brief sketches to raise the spirits of an audience after an evening of blank-verse tragedy. Several of these, too short for our modern requirements, contain excellent dramatic ideas well worthy of expansion, and *The Deuce is in Him* shows a good instance of these promising but undeveloped plots.

The original play ends with the discovery by the ladies of Colonel Tamper's unusual scheme for testing the affections of his lady-love, but it is very unlikely that two lively and high-spirited young women like Emily and Bell would have forgiven the masquerading Colonel without trying to "get some of their own back." The adapter has therefore shamelessly invented their counter-plot, the development of which also brings Mademoiselle de Florival's romance to a more dramatic conclusion.

He apologizes to all intelligent and right-minded readers.

W. G. R.

CHARACTERS

in order of their appearance, with the cast of the first performance of this version by THE CHIDDINGFOLD PLAYERS, October 30, 1929.

EMILY	Nancy Francis.
MADemoisELLE DE FLORIVAL	Elsie Milton.
BELL	Freda Joyce.
CHARLES	Leslie Plumley.
MAJOR BELFORD	Donald Covey.
COLONEL TAMPER	Powis Conway-Jones.
DR. PRATTLE	Walter Ranson.

SCENE.—A room in Emily's house.

The Deuce is in Him was first acted at Drury Lane Theatre on Friday, November 4, 1763, and first published, in octavo, in the same year.

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THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

ACT I

(A room in Emily's house. Emily and Mademoiselle de Florival are seated together on a sofa. Mademoiselle de Florival wears a long black cloak and a cocked hat.)

Emily. Dear madam, be assured that I will do everything in my power to serve you ; my brother knew that he might command my service.

Florival (sobbing). You cannot wonder, madam, that I should be extremely shocked at the necessity of presenting myself before you in—in——

Emily. Yes—in——?

(Mademoiselle de Florival opens her cloak. She is dressed in an officer's uniform—red coat and white breeches.)

Emily. Pray, madam, be comforted. There is something in your manner which assures me that every action of your life carries its apology along with it. And let me assure *you*—they are extremely well cut, and suit you to a nicety.

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Florival. Ah, madam, these are kind words to——

Emily. Dear madam, not at all. Permit me (*removing her cloak*). Stand up. Turn round. Nay, I vow, madam, 'tis vastly becoming.

Florival. But you must wonder why——

Emily. No, no, I will not venture to inquire into the particulars of your story until your mind is more at ease. But—if I might suggest—as you are now a gentleman, you should take off your hat.

Florival (*uncovering*). Ah, how foolish! I am indeed out of my part. But it is my interest to make you acquainted with my story. I am the daughter of Monsieur Florival, a French physician in the island of Belleisle. An English officer, who had been desperately wounded, was taken into my father's house, and as I had been brought up in England, he took some pleasure in my conversation.

Emily. And I dare swear you took some pleasure in his?

Florival. Madam, he won my affections, and asked me of my father in marriage; but alas, too much influenced by the prejudices so common between the two nations, my father forbade him his house—but not before we were secretly contracted to each other.

Emily. May I ask the officer's name?

Florival. Excuse me, madam. Till I see or hear from him once more, my prudence——

vanity—call it what you will—will not suffer me to mention it. Your brother, indeed, is acquainted with——

Emily. I beg your pardon—I'm asking questions already. But I hope you have no reason to think yourself neglected—forgotten?

Florival. Ah, no, no. He was soon recalled by orders from England, and, on my father's pressing me to consent to another match, I fled from Belleisle. Coming over in an English ship to Portsmouth, I expected, according to letters he had contrived to send me, to find my betrothed. But judge of my disappointment when I learned that he had embarked but three days before for the siege of the Havannah.

Emily (starting). The Havannah! Oh, but—madam—I am asking questions again, but—your friend is not a colonel, is he?

Florival. No, a major.

Emily (with a sigh of relief). Ah. Now—pray go on.

Florival. Madam, picture to yourself—I—alone in a strange kingdom—alone—and a woman.

Emily. You will find several other women in England, madam; they are not altogether unknown here.

Florival. But I was friendless—what could I do? In order to defeat inquiries after me, I disguised myself in this habit and mixed with the officers of the place.

Emily. Hm'm.

Florival. Plaît-il, madame ?

Emily. Oh—nothing—nothing. Go on.

Florival. Your brother soon discovered my uneasiness and saw through my disguise——

Emily. Yes, he's a clever boy.

Florival. I frankly confessed to him every particular of my story, in consequence of which he has thus generously recommended me to your protection.

Emily. Very kind and thoughtful of him, I'm sure. (*A pause. Then Emily impulsively takes her hand.*) And you may depend upon my friendship. But do you not find the situation a little—awkward ?

Florival. Ah, madam, I cannot tell you half its miseries—especially since your brother has convinced me that I am so liable to be discovered.

Emily (laughing). Well, frankly you are not quite my idea of a soldier. You must change that dress as soon as possible. I will procure everything for you—as the spectacle of a young gentleman buying petticoats for himself might excite remark. Then I will take you into the house with me and my sister, and, in the meantime, let me see you every day.

Florival. You are too good to me.

Emily. No, no. I shall expect you to dinner.

Florival. Ah, madame, je vous serre sur mon cœur—I fold you to my heart.

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Emily (laughing). No, you don't. Not until you are in petticoats ! Think of my reputation ! (*With a curtsy.*) Au plaisir, mon beau galant.

Florival (with a flourish). Madame, je reste à vos pieds. (*Exit, R.*)

Emily. A charming young man—and a most attractive woman. (*Sighing*) Heigh-ho, I am glad that her lover in the Havannah is not a colonel. Of course I did not imagine for a moment—but she is dangerously attractive.

(*Enter Bell, L.*)

Bell. So, sister ! I met your fine gentleman. Upon my word, the young spark must be a favourite—you have had a *tête-à-tête* of above half an hour together.

Emily. How d'you like him ?

Bell. Not at all ; a soft, lady-like gentleman, with a white hand, a mincing step, and a smooth chin. Where does this pretty master come from ?

Emily. From my brother.

Bell. Who is he ?

Emily. A present to you.

Bell. A present to me ! What d'you mean ?

Emily. Why, did not my brother promise to take care of you before he went abroad ?

Bell. Well, and what then ?

Emily. What then ! Why, he has taken care of you—sent you a pretty fellow for a husband. Could he possibly take better care of you ?

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Bell. A husband ! A puppet—a doll—a——

Emily. A soldier, Bell. A red coat. Consider——

Bell. A fine soldier, indeed ! I can't bear to see a red coat cover anything but a man, sister. Give me a soldier that looks as if he could love me and protect me—aye, and tame me too, if I deserved it. If I was to have this thing for a husband I would set him on the top of my India cabinet with the china figures, and bid the maid take care she didn't break him.

Emily. Well, well ; if this is the case, I don't know what my brother will say to you. Here's his letter ; read it, and send him an answer yourself. (*Gives Bell a letter.*)

Bell (*reading*). “ Dear sister, the bearer of this message is a lady ”—a lady ! So, so ! Your servant, madam ; and yours too, sister—“ a lady whose case is truly worthy of compassion, and whom I most earnestly recommend to your protection.” Um—um—um. “ Take care of her ”—um—um—um—“ not too many questions ”—now, why ?—um—um—um—“ in town for a few days.” Emily ! I'll be whipped if this is not some fly-away baggage of his ! The woman's no better than she should be !

Emily. Oh, Bell !

Bell. I'll be sworn to it. Masquerading as a man—not to be asked questions——

Emily. No, no, Bell. I know her whole history—quite a little novel. She is a French-

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woman, Mademoiselle Florival, run away from her father at Belleisle, and dying for an English gentleman in the Havannah.

Bell. The Havannah—she hasn't been there after your Colonel Tamper, I hope ?

Emily. She hasn't been there at all. But if Colonel Tamper had been at the taking of Belleisle, I own that I might have felt uneasy.

Bell. Suppose I should bring you some news of him ?

Emily. Of whom ?

Bell. Your Colonel Tamper.

Emily. What d'you mean ?

Bell. Only a card.

Emily. A card ! From whom ? What card ?

Bell. Oh, what a delightful flutter it puts her into !

Emily. Nay, but tell me.

Bell. Well then—while your visitor was here there came a card from Major Belford——

Emily. Where is it ? Why didn't you bring it to me ?

Bell. My dear Emily, I admit your claim to Colonel Tamper, but you don't own the entire British army. I took the liberty of sending Major Belford an answer myself.

Emily. But let me see the card—let me see it.

Bell. Oh, it was nothing but his compliments and desiring to have the honour of waiting upon you any time this morning from Colonel Tamper.

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Emily. From Colonel Tamper ! What can this mean ? Why does he not come himself ?

Bell. He's not arrived—not come to town yet, I suppose.

Emily. Oh, Bell ! I can suppose at least twenty things—and they frighten me to death.

Bell. I think now such a message ought to put you quite out of your pain. Colonel Tamper is alive—he couldn't come from Colonel Tamper if there was no such person in existence.

Emily. No, but suppose some accident has happened to him. Oh, how miserable it is to dote upon a man whose profession exposes him hourly to the risk of his life !

Bell. Lord, Emily, how can you torment yourself so ? Besides—should the worst come to the worst—it is only an admirer lost ; and that's a loss easily repaired, as you know.

Emily (laughing). Go, you madcap. But you'll pay for all this one day, I warrant you. When you come to be heartily in for it yourself, you will know that when once a woman feels a pure and disinterested passion for a man, nothing but that man can make her happy.

Bell. Well, I admire your disinterested passion, as you call it, of all things ! Your love, my dear Emily, is not so *very* disinterested. You pitch upon a man of figure and fortune, handsome, sensible, good-natured and well bred ; of rank in life and credit in his profession ; a man whom half the women in town

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would pull caps for ; and then you talk of your
“ pure and disinterested passion.”

Emily. Why then, I declare if he had not a friend on earth, or a shilling in the world, or if he was as miserable as ill fortune could make him, I would prefer Colonel Tamper to the first duke in the kingdom.

Bell. Yes, dear, it's a mighty easy thing for persons rolling in affluence and a coach and six to talk of living on bread and water, and the comforts of love in a cottage.

Emily. Ah, Bell, when once the heart has settled its affections, it will not withdraw them for any paltry consideration in the world.

Bell. I don't call a coach and six a paltry consideration.

Emily. I do—unless Colonel Tamper were driving it.

Bell. “ Methinks the lady doth protest too much.”

Emily. “ Ay, but she'll keep her word.”

(*Enter Charles, R.*)

Charles. Major Belford, madam.

Emily. Show him in. (*Exit Charles.*) Oh, Bell, I am ready to drop with apprehension !

(*Enter Major Belford, R.*)

Belford. Ladies, your humble servant. I rejoice to find you so well.

Bell. And we congratulate you, Major, on your safe return from the Havannah. How does your friend, Colonel Tamper ?

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Belford. He is very well, madam, but——

Emily. But what, sir? Something has happened to him—I know it! Is he in England, sir?

Belford. Yes, madam.

Emily. In town?

Belford. Yes, madam.

Emily. Then why have we not the pleasure of seeing him?

Belford. He'll be here immediately, madam.

Bell. There, Emily, I knew all would be well.

Emily (with delight). Here immediately!

Belford. But it was thought proper that I should wait on you first—to prepare you for his reception.

Emily. To—prepare me! What does he mean?

Bell. To prepare us. Why, does he want red cloth and a salute of ten guns?

Belford. Only to prevent your being alarmed at his appearance, madam.

Emily. Oh, heavens! Alarmed! What is the matter?

Belford. Nay, nothing—a trifle—the mere chance of war—la fortune de la guerre, as the French call it; that's all, madam.

Emily (sinking into a chair). Bell!

Bell. I think, Major, that my sister has had about as much of your preparation as she can support. You might now explain.

Emily. Dear sir—explain.

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Belford. The Colonel, you know, madam, is a man of spirit. Having exposed his person very gallantly in the several actions before the town of the Havannah, he received many wounds, one or two of which have been attended with rather disagreeable circumstances.

Emily. But—he is well at present, sir?

Belford. Extremely well, madam.

Emily. Then, sir—what——

Belford. Do not be alarmed, madam.

Bell. Bless the man, where's the use of telling a girl not to be alarmed when you are frightening her out of her wits? Pray go on.

Belford. The two principal wounds which the Colonel received, madam, were one a little above the knee, and the other in his face. In consequence of the first he has lost the use of his left leg, and the latter has deprived him of the sight of one eye. (*Emily is about to faint.*)

Bell. Good gracious! And what have you done with what's left of him?

Belford. It's waiting outside, madam—I mean *he's* waiting outside.

Emily. Oh, Bell—oh, heavens!

Bell. Poor Emily! How could you have been so abrupt, sir?

Belford. But you told me to——

Bell. Never mind what I told you. Great, rough men have no business to come scaring poor girls out of their senses. Emily—my dear——

Belford. Excuse me, madam—I was afraid of making you uneasy, and yet it was necessary you should be acquainted with these circumstances, previous to your meeting with the Colonel.

Emily (*faintly*). Lost a leg and an arm, did you say, sir?

Belford. No, not an arm—an eye, madam.

Emily. An eye! That's worse!

Belford. Rather unfortunate, to be sure. But we should consider, madam, that we have saved his life.

Emily. Very true. Yes—yes, of course so as he has his life I am happy. And I ought now to be attached to him not only from tenderness but from compassion.

Belford. After all, his appearance is much better than you imagine. His face, by the help of a black ribbon, is very little disfigured, and he walks so naturally with his wooden leg that, beyond a slight hitch in his gait, there is no material alteration in his person and deportment. Besides which, in point of health and spirits, he is particularly well.

Emily. I'm glad of that. But alas, he whose person was so charming—and his eyes that were so brilliant—so full of expression——

Belford. On his own account, madam, this accident gives him no uneasiness; to say the truth, he seems rather vain about it. I hope, therefore, that when he comes you will not

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seem too deeply affected, lest your shrinking from him shock the Colonel.

Bell. Yes, Emily, the Major is right. I think he shows great sensibility.

Emily (softly). Odious man—I hate him!

Bell. Hate the Major? But why?

Emily. Because he has got both his horrid eyes—and lots of legs—while my Colonel——

Bell. Yes, dear, but think of the poor Colonel, and—would not this, perhaps, be the moment for a little disinterested passion?

Emily. Disinterested, sister?

Bell. Yes, that's what you called it. And you said that you had set your heart upon him. Well—he is still all yours.

Emily. Not all, Bell—only some of him. When a woman gives all to a man, she expects to receive all in return. I must—yes, I *must* endeavour to convince him that he is as dear to me as ever, but I feel—I feel that my heart lies buried with his left leg in the far Havannah.

(*Enter Charles, R.*)

Charles. Colonel Tamper, madam.

Emily. Colonel Tamper. Oh, no—no. I cannot——

Bell (softly). Hush. (*To Charles*) Desire the Colonel to walk up. (*Exit Charles.*) Compose yourself, my dear. (*To Belford*) Poor Emily—I am in pain for her.

(*Re-enter Charles.*)

Charles. Colonel Tamper, madam.

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(Exit Charles, as Colonel Tamper enters. He wears a black patch over one eye, kept in place by a black ribbon. His left leg is bent, and a wooden peg, upon which he walks, is strapped to the knee.)

Tamper. My dearest Emily—how happy am I to see you once again! From perils by sea and land—from the field of glory itself—I have brought back the honest heart and hand which I devoted to you!

Bell (to Belford). Yes, and they are about all he *has* brought back.

Tamper. As to the rest of my body, you see I did not care sixpence what became of it. Miss Bell, I rejoice to see you so well. Major, I am yours. But—my Emily——

Emily (faintly). Oh, Colonel——

(Bursts into tears and clings to Bell.)

Tamper. How's this? Tears?

Bell. You should not have followed the Major so soon, Colonel; she had scarce recovered the first shock from his intelligence.

Tamper. My impatience would suffer me to delay no longer. Why do you weep so, Emily? Are you sorry to see me again?

Emily. Sorry to see you so unfortunate.

Tamper. Unfortunate! Call me rather fortunate. What I have lost I have given to my country. What is a leg more or less?

Bell (to Belford). The man talks as if he were a centipede or a daddy longlegs.

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Emily (with an effort). I am glad you have saved your life.

Tamper. I hope you are, my dear. Look upon me, then. What, not one glance? Will not you deign to look at your poor, maimed soldier? (*A pause.*) Is it possible, then, that any alteration of my person can occasion a change in your sentiments?

Bell (to Bedford). Quite possible, I should say. It certainly would in my case.

Emily. N—no, Colonel. No. Of course not. Surely it shows no want of affection to be so much hurt by your misfortunes.

Tamper. Misfortunes! No misfortunes at all. Nothing but the common casualties—the ordinary incidents of a soldier's life. The loss of a leg or an arm is nothing at all to a soldier—and should be nothing at all to a soldier's sweetheart.

Bell. When might she begin to feel concern, then? When his head comes off?

Emily. Then—do you really think so little of this accident?

Tamper. Really; and you shall think as lightly of it too. You will find more in me still than in half the battered rakes and fops about town. It injures me no more than it does a fine tree to lop my branches. My trunk is heart of oak, and I shall thrive the better for it.

Emily. But is there no hope of recovering

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your eyesight? Oh, we must have the best advice. Is the sight quite lost?

Tamper. Quite. Blind as a mill-horse—blind as a beetle, Emily. But what does it signify? Love is blind, you know, and if I have lost one eye, why, they say I shall see the clearer with the other.

Emily (to Bell). I cannot look at him without shuddering. (*She sinks into a chair.*)

Bell (bending over her). How are you, sister?

Tamper. Nay, prythee, Emily, be comforted. More than all this might have happened to me at home. I might have thrown away my life in a duel, or broke my neck in a fox chase; a fit of the gout or an apoplexy might have maimed me ten times worse for ever. You must not take on thus—if you do, I shall be extremely uneasy.

Emily. Excuse me, sir, I cannot help it—but be assured I esteem you as much as ever, sir!

Tamper. “Esteem!” and “Sir!” This is cold language—I have not been used to hear you talk in that style, Emily.

Emily. I don’t know what I’m saying—I’m not well—pray give me leave to retire.

Tamper. When shall we name the happy day? I shall make shift to dance on that occasion—though only on my wooden peg. Emily, tell me, when shall we be happy?

Emily (rising angrily). I don’t know, I’m sure. I feel very far from happy at this moment. Take me to my room, Bell.

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Bell. She is very ill ; don't trouble her any more now, Colonel, but let me try to procure her some repose.

Tamper. Ay, a short sleep and a little reflection and all will be well, I daresay. I will be here again soon and administer consolation, I warrant you. Adieu, my dear Emily.

Emily. Adieu. Oh, Bell !

(Exit in tears with Bell.)

Tamper (as the door closes). Ha, ha, ha ! *(Pushes the black patch off his eye, which is shown to be quite sound.)* Well, Belford, what is your opinion now ? *(Unstrapping his wooden leg.)* Lord, how stiff my leg is ! *(Takes off wooden leg and puts his left foot to the ground.)* Well ? Will she stand the test or no ?

Belford. If she does, it's more than you deserve. I could wish she would give you up with all my heart, if I did not think you would run stark mad with vexation.

Tamper. Why so ?

Belford. Because, as I have told you before, this is a most absurd and ridiculous scheme—a mad trick which will most probably end in your losing the affections of an amiable lady.

Tamper. You know, Belford, there is an excess of sensibility in my nature.

Belford. There's an excess of damned vanity in your nature.

Tamper. Why ? Because, before I bind myself to a woman, I must be assured that she will

at all events, and in all circumstances, retain her affection for me ?

Belford. S'dearth, I've no patience to hear you. Have you not all the reasons in the world to rest assured that Emily entertains a most sincere affection for you ?

Tamper. Perhaps, but I am not equally assured of the basis upon which that affection is founded.

Belford. Her folly, I'm afraid.

Tamper. Nay, but I am very serious, Major.

Belford. You are very ridiculous, Colonel.

Tamper. Well, it does not signify talking. I must be convinced that she loves me for my own sake—for myself alone—and that, were I divested of every desirable gift of fortune and nature, she would continue to prefer me to the rest of mankind.

Belford. Why, in heaven's name, should she ? This is the most high-flown metaphysics I ever heard—picked up on one of your expeditions to France, I suppose. No plain Englishman ever dreamed of such a whim. Love you for yourself—for your own sake ? Not she.

Tamper. How then ?

Belford. Why, for her own, of course—and so would anybody else. I am your friend ; and why ? Because I am glad to have commerce with a man of talent, honesty, and honour. Let me see you behave like a poltroon, or a villain, and I'll cut your throat with pleasure.

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Tamper. I don't doubt you. But if she doesn't love me for myself—for my own sake, as I said—how can I be certain that she will not transfer that love to another?

Belford. Good Lord! “For your own sake”—“for yourself”! Why, what in the name of common sense is this self that you make such a rout about? Your birth, your fortune—character—talents—and perhaps even that sweet person of yours—all these things may have taken her; but after all, none of these things are *yourself*. You are but the ground, and these qualities are woven into your frame. It is not the stuff but the richness of the work that stamps a value on the piece.

Tamper. Why, this is downright sermonizing, Major. Give you pudding sleeves and a grizzle wig and you might be chaplain to the regiment. But, Major, matrimony is a leap in the dark indeed if we cannot make ourselves certain of the fidelity and affection of our wives.

Belford. Marriage is precarious, I grant you, but you must play like a wary gamester. I would not marry a notorious profligate nor a woman in a consumption—and incidentally, my dear Colonel, I should make sure that my wife had a couple of legs and both her eyes—but there is no more answering for the continuance of her affection than for the continuance of her good health.

Tamper. Fine maxims. Follow 'em your-

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self ; they won't serve me. A fine time indeed to test a woman's fidelity—*after* marriage. No, no ; no fool's paradise for me, Belford.

Belford. A fool's paradise is better than a wiseacre's purgatory.

Tamper (listening). S'death, Belford, who comes here ? I shall be discovered. (*Claps on his patch and assumes a limp, as there is no time to put on his wooden leg.*)

Belford (listening). It's that fool, Prattle.

Tamper. Destruction ! He knows me—he'll see through my disguise.

Belford. Turn your back—he'll notice nothing.

(*Enter Dr. Prattle, R.*)

Prattle. Gentlemen, your most obedient. Mighty sorry, extremely concerned to hear the lady's taken ill. I was sent for in a violent hurry—had forty patients at least to visit—resolved to see her, however. Major Belford, I rejoice to see you in good health. Have I the honour of knowing this gentleman ? (*Peering at Tamper's back and going to him.*)

Tamper (limping away). No, no, certainly not.

Belford. An acquaintance of mine, Doctor ; you don't know him, I believe. A little hurt in the service—that's all.

Prattle. Accidents, Major, accidents will happen. Sad, sad. No less than seven brought into our infirmary yesterday, and ten into the hospital. Did you hear, Major Belford, poor

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dear Lady Di Racket broke her arm last night by an overturn? Thrown from her curricule, gentlemen—or rather people are saying it was Lord George Rakewell's curricule—such wicked gossip! I was able to give them the lie, gentlemen—the curricule is *not* Lord George's—he jobs it from the livery stable, and hasn't paid Splinter's bill these two years.

Tamper (aside). Plague on his chattering—I wish he'd go.

Prattle. Did you see the vast crowd of coaches getting in at Lady Thunder's rout? Every one there—positively every one—and Sir Helter Skelter, who drove himself, put out his collar bone by a fall from his own coach-box. Not the worse for liquor, gentlemen; no, no, I will not hear that—a little elated, perhaps, but not——

Belford. But your fair patient, Dr. Prattle—I am afraid we detain you.

Prattle. Not at all, not at all. I'll attend her immediately. (*Is going, then turns back.*) You have not heard of the change in the Ministry?

Tamper. Pshaw!

Belford. Yes, I have. (*Exit Prattle, L.*)

Tamper. Chattering jackanapes!

Belford. So, you see, the apothecary's come already—soon we shall have the knocker tied up and straw down in the street. But are you not ashamed, Tamper, to cause all this to-do?

Tamper. What could possess them to send

ACT I.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

for this blockhead? He'll make her worse and worse—he'll talk her to death!

Belford. Oh, the puppy's in fashion, you know.

Tamper. He's an arrant gossip, and anything he knows might as well be published in the *Daily Advertiser*. But come, for fear of discovery we had better decamp for the present. March!

Belford. You'll expose yourself confoundedly, *Tamper*.

Tamper. Say no more. I am resolved to put her affection to the test. If she's thorough proof, she's mine for ever. Come along.

Belford (pointing). *Tamper.*

Tamper. Oh lord, my leg—I forgot.

(Picks up wooden leg and tucks it under his arm.)

Belford. Lord, lord! What a fool self-love makes of a man!

(Exeunt, R. As the door closes behind them enter Prattle, L. He goes to sofa, shakes up and arranges cushions, places small table, vinaigrette, etc., then returns to door, L., and leads in Emily. Bell follows.)

Prattle (installing Emily on sofa). Well, well, well, and how are we feeling now? A little stronger—a little more composed?

Bell. I think you seem to be a good deal recovered, *Emily*.

Emily. I am much better than I was, thank you. Heigh-ho!

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Prattle. Aye, aye. I knew we should be better by-and-by. These little nervous disorders are very common all over the town—or rather in its better quarters—merely owing to the damp weather, which relaxes the tone of the whole system. The poor Duchess of Porcelain has had a fever on her spirits these three weeks ; Lady Teaser is absolutely hysterical, and Lady Betty Dawdle is half mad with lowness of spirits, headache, tremblings, vain fears, and wanderings of the mind.

Emily. Pray, Mr. Prattle, how does poor Miss Crompton do ?

Prattle. Never better, ma'am. Curiously enough, her disorder came to an end at the same hour as the Marquis of Cranford's engagement. His intended match with Miss Richman, the hundred thousand pound fortune, is quite off ; and so, ma'am, Miss Crompton is perfectly well again. By-the-bye, she has another reason to rejoice, for her cousin, Miss Dorothy, who lives with her, and begins, as you know, to look rather old maidish, made a sudden conquest of Squire Bumper, a Lancashire gentleman of great estate and but now come to town, and they were married at Miss Crompton's yesterday evening.

Emily. Married already ! Why, they can hardly have met.

Prattle. The affair was perhaps a little hurried, but Mr. Bumper has only seen the lady by

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candlelight so far, and Miss Crompton thought it unwise to wait until the days grew longer.

Bell. Is it true, Dr. Prattle, that Sir John Medley is going to the south of France for the recovery of his health?

Prattle. Very true, ma'am—that is, very true that he's going—but not for the recovery of his health. Sir John is well enough himself, but his affairs are in a galloping consumption, I assure you. No less than two executions in his house—I heard it for a fact at Lady Modish's. Poor gentleman, he has had a sad run a long time; but that last affair at Newmarket totally undid him.

Bell. I vow, Dr. Prattle, you are extremely amusing. You know the chitchat of the whole town.

Prattle. Can't avoid picking up a little news, to be sure, ma'am. Go into the best houses—attend the best families in the kingdom—nobody better received—nobody more in request.

Bell. Is there any public news of any kind, Doctor?

Prattle. None at all, miss—except that the officers are most of them returned from the Havannah.

Emily. So we hear, sir.

Prattle. I saw Colonel Tamper yesterday. Oh, ay. And Major Belford—and another gentleman as I came in here this morning.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT I.

Bell. That was Colonel Tamper, sir.

Prattle. That gentleman Colonel Tamper, miss ?

Bell. Yes, sir.

Prattle. Pardon me, miss. I know Colonel Tamper very well. That poor gentleman was somewhat disabled—had suffered in the wars. Colonel Tamper is not so unfortunate.

Emily. Alas, yes, Doctor. That terrible accident !

Prattle. What accident ?

Bell. His wounds—his wounds. Don't you know ?

Prattle. Wounds ! Upon my word, I never heard he had received any.

Bell. No ? Why, he lost a leg and an eye in the siege of the Havannah !

Prattle. Did he ? Why then, miss, I'll be bold to say he's the luckiest man in the world.

Emily. Why so, sir ?

Prattle. Because, ma'am, if he lost a leg or an eye at the Havannah, they must have grown again—or he has somehow procured others that do the business every whit as well.

Emily. Impossible.

Prattle. I wish I may die, ma'am, if the Colonel had not yesterday two as good legs and fine eyes as any man living. If he lost one of each at the Havannah, we practitioners in physic should be much obliged to him to com-

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municate his receipt for the benefit of Greenwich and Chelsea Hospitals.

Emily. Are you sure that the Colonel has had no such loss, sir ?

Prattle. As sure as that I'm here, ma'am. He was at Mrs. Daylight's last night, and everybody thought he was rather improved than injured by his expedition. But—od so !—now I recollect—ha, ha, ha !

Bell. What's the matter, Doctor ?

Prattle. Excuse me, ladies ; I can't forbear laughing. Why—the gentleman who was here—Colonel Tamper. I thought I knew him, but he limped away and hid his face—'pon my word, he did it very well. He would make a figure at a masked ball. Ha, ha, ha !

Emily and Bell (with an effort). Ha, ha, ha !

Prattle. Ha, ha, ha ! Very comical ! A frolic, I suppose.

Bell. A—frolic. Yes, Dr. Prattle, a frolic.

Emily. A frolic.

Prattle. Ha, ha, ha ! And now, ma'am (*rising*), I must bid you good-morning. I have several patients to see before dinner. Mrs. Tremor, I know, will be dying with the vapours till she sees me, and I am to meet Dr. Valerian at Lord Hectic's in less than half an hour.

Emily. Ring the bell, sister. Mr. Prattle, your servant.

Prattle. Ladies, your very humble servant.

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I shall send you a cordial mixture, ma'am, to be taken in any particular faintness or lowness of spirits ; and some draughts for morning and evening. Have a care of catching cold, be cautious in your diet, and I make no doubt but in a few days we shall be perfectly recovered. Ladies, your servant ; your most obedient, humble servant.

(Exit, R. The ladies sit silent for a minute, then both half rise from their chairs as if about to speak, then sink back and sit silent again, staring at each other.)

ACT II

(The scene is the same. The two ladies are discovered sitting staring at each other as at the end of Act I. They are still silent for a minute.)

Bell (at last, softly). Sister Emily.

Emily. Well, sister?

Bell (with emphasis). Well, sister!

Emily. Well? *(A pause.)*

Bell. What do you think of Colonel Tamper now, sister?

Emily (furiously). What do I think of Colonel Tamper, sister? I—I—*(suddenly quiet)*—I don't know, sister.

Bell. Don't know?

Emily. Why—I am so angry—and so happy, so insulted—and so delighted, that I don't know whether I'm in or out of humour. I want to slap his face, and I want to burst out crying and hug him.

Bell. Is it possible that you can have so little spirit? Your tattling apothecary will tell this tale at every house he goes into—it will be town talk. If a lover of mine had attempted to put

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such an impudent deceit upon me, I would never see his face again.

Emily. If your lover were very dear to you, Bell, you might not be quite so violent.

Bell. Indeed, but I should. What ! To come here with a Canterbury Tale of a leg and an eye and heaven knows what, merely to try the extent of his power over you—to gratify his ridiculous vanity in case you should retain your affection for him, or reproach you for your infidelity if you could not bear the sight of him !

Emily. Yes, it's abominable, Bell—disgraceful, I own. And yet—not a quarter of an hour ago I would have given half my fortune to know that there was a trick in the tale.

Bell. Oh, I suppose it was all very clever. I never knew one of these men of extraordinary sense, as they are called, that was not a greater fool than the rest.

Emily. After all, Bell, I did not behave very well to him. I must confess that he discovered the infirmities of my temper.

Bell. I saw that plain enough. I told you what your pure and disinterested affection was worth long ago. But this is so flagrant an offence. Oh, I could not marry him this seven years !

Emily. It's lucky then, sister, that you will not be called upon to do so.

Bell. But what about you ? Will you take

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

all this meekly and trot off to church on his arm, with a curtsy and a "Thank you kindly, sir"? Oh, if we could plague him heartily! Oh, for some charming invention to torment him!

Emily. As to that, sister, I should be glad to have some comical revenge upon him—with all my heart, I should.

(Enter Charles, R.)

Charles. Captain Johnson, ma'am.

Emily. Desire him to walk up. *(Exit Charles.)*
I'm fit to see any company now. This discovery will do me more good than all Dr. Prattle's cordial mixtures, as he calls them.

Bell. Oh, you're in charming spirits, sister—but—Captain Johnson? You abound in the military—captains, colonels, and majors by wholesale. The place is a barrack yard. Who's Captain Johnson?

Emily. Only the name that Mademoiselle Florival, the Belleisle lady you saw this morning, goes by.

Bell. Oh, sister—the luckiest thing in the world! Here's the first dose for the Colonel!

Emily. What do you mean?

Bell. Captain Johnson shall be Colonel Tamper's rival, sister.

Emily. Hush! Here she is. *(Enter Mademoiselle de Florival, R., still in officer's uniform.)*
Give me leave, madam, to introduce you to my sister.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Bell. I have heard your story, madam, and am inclined to envy you your romantic adventures.

Florival. I am infinitely obliged to you and to that lady, madam; but I fear I disturb you.

Emily. No, no; but I have been extremely ill since I saw you this morning, and terrified beyond measure.

Florival. I am very sorry. What has alarmed you?

Emily. It is so ridiculous, I scarce know how to tell you.

Bell. Then I will. You must know, madam, that my sister was engaged to an officer who went out on a late military expedition. He is just returned—but with the strangest conceit that ever filled the brain of a lover. He took it into his head to try my sister's faith by pretending to be wounded and maimed, and actually visited her this morning disguised as a blind cripple. We have but now detected the imposture, and want your assistance to be pleasantly revenged upon him.

Florival. You may command me in anything. But I am no advocate for cruelty.

Emily. There is no cruelty in the case. As you are, in appearance, such a smart young gentleman, my sister has merrily suggested that you should provoke Colonel Tamper's jealousy by appearing in the character of a

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

successful rival. Was that not your device, sister ?

Bell. Yes ; and if this lady will come into it, we'll make the wise Colonel sick of his rogueries, I warrant you.

Emily. He well deserves the lesson, I assure you. Why, his cruel trick almost sent me distracted !

Florival. Then—an idea. Why not be distracted ? Why not show him the unhappy heroine of tragedy whose woes have turned her brain ?

Bell. Yes, yes, sister ! Scattered flowers and loosened locks—Mrs. Cibber as Belvidera—

“ Ha ! Look there !

My husband bloody and his friend too ! Murder !

Who has done this ? Speak to me, thou sad vision ! ”

Oh, we shall have rare sport. But can you play the part, Emily ?

Emily. Never fear me, Bell. Dr. Prattle's intelligence has given me spirits enough for anything. Now I know the Colonel's misfortunes are but a trick, I am equal to any amount of madness on my own account.

Bell. But I want to be mad too. Can't we all be mad, and present him with a whole asylum of lunatics ?

Florival. No, no ; only the heroine runs mad. You are the devoted but broken-hearted sister.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Bell. And you ?

Florival. I am the gallant protector of injured innocence, the righter of wrongs. This thoughtless trifler with the affections of confiding women shall know what it is to have a man to reckon with. Fire and brimstone, sir, but you shall give me satisfaction, sir ! Ha, ha !

Emily. Capital, capital ! You ruffle it to admiration. Now he may return at any moment—are we ready for him ?

Florival. A little interesting pallor, I think—where is the powder ?

Bell. Here.

(*She brings powder box. Florival powders Emily's face.*)

Emily. And flowers—I can't go mad without flowers. There on the table, Bell. Now I think we're——

(*Enter Charles, R.*)

Charles. Colonel Tamper, ma'am.

Emily. Show him up. (*Exit Charles.*) I'll run in and make a toilette. Now, ladies, work him heartily ; cut him to the bone, I charge you. If you show him the least mercy, you are no women. And then—Enter Belvidera !

(*Emily goes out, L., as Tamper enters, R., still wearing his patch and wooden leg.*)

Tamper. This it is to have new servants ! Not at home, indeed. A pack of blockheads to think of denying my Emily to me. I knew the dear soul was a little out of order indeed,

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but—(*seeing Florival*)—I beg pardon, Miss Bell. I did not know you were admitting company.

Bell. Oh, this gentleman is a particular friend of my sister. He is let in at any time.

Tamper. Oh, indeed !

Bell. Let me introduce you—Colonel Tamper, Captain Johnson. (*The two bow coldly to each other.*) I did not expect you to return so soon, sir.

Tamper. No, I believe I am come somewhat unexpectedly indeed, madam.

Bell. If your return had not been so precipitate, sir, I should have sent you a message to prevent your giving yourself that trouble.

Tamper. Madam—a message ? For what reason ?

Bell. Because (*glancing at Florival*)—because we are under the shadow of a great affliction.

Tamper. A great affliction ?

Bell. My unfortunate sister——

Florival. Our unhappy friend——

Tamper. Emily ? But I saw her only half an hour ago !

Bell. Ah, the mutability of fortune !

Florival. Ah, the transitory nature of human happiness !

Tamper. But what's the matter with her ?

Florival (*advancing and laying a kindly hand on Tamper's shoulder*). Sir, you have much to bear already. The burden of your infirmities

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

is heavy upon you—I am loth to add to it.
Lean upon me, sir, I beg. (*Offering her arm.*)

Bell. Ah, yes, sir. Let us support you.

(*Sustaining Tamper on the other side.*)

Tamper. Will you both please to let me alone
—and tell me what is the matter?

Florival. The unhappy lady—prepare yourself, sir——

Bell. Overwhelmed by the shock of seeing
you blinded and maimed—oh, sir, prepare
yourself——

Bell and Florival. Has gone distraught.

Tamper. What!

Bell. Has lost her wits.

Tamper. Lost her—impossible!

(*Falls into a chair.*)

Florival. Ah, what a noble mind is here o'er-
thrown!

Bell. Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune
and harsh.

Florival (*softly*). Not too much Shakespeare
—he may recognize it.

Bell. Not he. Soldiers never open a book.

Tamper. But—this is too terrible—I can-
not believe it. Emily—my Emily! Sure you
jest——

Florival. Would a man of feeling jest upon
such a subject? Jest is come to sad earnest.
She has run distracted.

Bell. All from your cruel, your wicked
thoughtlessness in appearing suddenly before

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

her—thus—the blighted ruin of the man she loved !

Tamper. But surely, madam, the alteration is not so complete as to——

Bell. I'll be judged by this gentleman. Captain Johnson, here is a miniature painted of the Colonel just before he went abroad, and reckoned a striking likeness. Did you ever see a poor creature so altered ?

(She hands a miniature to Florival, who inspects it.)

Florival. Well, really, there is, I must own, a very visible difference. That black ribbon makes a total eclipse of the right eye—and the irregular movement of the leg gives such a quaint twist to the rest of the body that——

Tamper. Sir ! But it is to you I address myself, madam. I am fond and foolish enough to believe that your sister loves me. The shock of my altered appearance has overcome her for the moment, but when she realizes that I am safe and again with her—pray, madam, let me see her at once.

Bell. See her ! She must never set eyes on you again !

Florival. Let me ask you, sir, if the unhappy lady herself had been so unfortunate as to lose a leg and an eye, should you, do you think, be in such haste to gaze upon her ?

Tamper (turning furiously). Sir, this affair is none of your business, and if you had the natural

instincts of a gentleman you would leave the room. It is for me alone to tend and succour this lady. Am I not her betrothed ?

Florival. Well, sir, and what then, sir ? The lady, I presume, is not included, like an old mansion house, in the rent roll of your estate or the inventory of your chattels. Her hand, I hope, is her own property, and she may bestow it upon you—or me—or anybody else, just as she pleases.

Tamper. Hell and damnation ! I am afraid you are a puppy, sir !

Florival. A puppy ? (*Aside to Bell*) Qu'est-ce que c'est ? What is—puppy ?

Bell. A little dog.

Florival (to Tamper). I would rather be a little dog than a villain.

Tamper. Well, take your choice—that's your affair. But give up all claim to this lady, or (*half drawing sword*) you will have to deal with me.

Florival. To deal—— (*To Bell*) What does he mean ?

Bell. He means that you must fight him. Oh, heavens, here will be murder done ! Don't stir, I command you, Captain. (*Placing herself before Tamper.*) You would not injure the helpless ?

Florival. Never fear me, madam. I am not such a poltroon as to contend with this poor gentleman. Do you think I would set my

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

strength and skill against a blind man and a cripple ?

Tamper. Follow me, sir. I'll soon teach you to use your own legs.

Bell (to Tamper). Pray, sir, do not expose yourself.

Tamper. Villain !

Florival. Poor man.

Tamper. Jackanapes !

Bell. Oh lord, there will be bloodshed !

Florival. Be calm, madam. Be sure that I shall not forget myself. (*To Tamper*) Do not tremble, poor man ; you are safe from me.

Tamper (in a fury). This is beyond all sufferance ! Know, then, that I am not the mangled thing which you imagine me ! See here—and here ! (*Tears off bandage, and unstraps and throws away wooden leg.*) Now, sir—what have you to say ?

(*Bell and Florival go into peals of laughter.*)

Bell. What a wonderful cure of lameness and blindness ! Your case is truly curious, sir—and attested by two credible witnesses. Will you give us leave to print it in the public papers ?

Tamper. Madam——

Florival. I think the story would make a figure in the *Philosophical Transactions*.

Tamper. Sir !

Bell. A pretty leg indeed. Will you dance a minuet with me, Colonel ?

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Tamper. Laugh, madam—laugh and jest ; I am a fair target for your arrows. But for you, sir, be kind enough to follow me—we will pursue our argument elsewhere.

Bell. No, no, Captain Johnson ; don't leave us !

Florival. Your request is a command, madam. And be sure that I never so far forget myself as to be drawn into a vulgar brawl in the house of a lady.

Tamper. That must be very convenient for you, sir ; but such a nicely brought-up young gentleman should remember that all men may not have his—er—wonderful self-command. Come, sir.

Bell. Gentlemen, gentlemen—is this a moment for dissension and rancour ? (*To Tamper*) Sir, think of the ruin you have brought upon this house by your untimely jest—for I suppose this masquerade is your idea of a jest. Think of my unhappy sister—— Nay, soft ! Did I not hear her voice ?

Florival. Ah, hush, sir. Listen !

(*Emily is heard singing in the distance.*)

Bell (*opening the door, L., and looking out*). She comes. Now, sir, look upon your work ; triumph in the success of your plot, inhuman, barbarous man ; for in you, where her young innocence expected protection, in you has she found her undoing !

Florival. Yes, sir. Put up your anger with

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

your sword. I have a heart that swells at an affront received, but melts at an injury given. I excuse your behaviour to me, but who shall excuse the ruin you have wrought here ?

Bell. See where she comes !

Emily (singing without)—

Early one morning, just when the sun was rising,
I heard a maid sing in the valley below :

“ Oh, never leave me,

Oh, don't deceive me ;

How could you treat a poor maid so ? ”

(As she sings the last line she enters, her hair hanging loose, and fantastically wreathed with flowers.)

Florival (coming to her). Ah, poor child, poor child ! Do you know me ?

Emily. You—you are Launcelot du Lac. Did you not love a queen—and do you dream of pale ghosts and wailing winds ? I dream of wandering fires and tall, gigantic sights. Take heed—s-sh ! It comes now. Who's that ? I have seen that face sure, but—*(with a scream)*—ah, 'tis marred—terribly ! I cannot look at it !

Bell. Come, sister ; try to repose a little.

Emily. No, no—I must be up to go to church—and I must dress me—put on my new gown—and be so fine to meet my love.

Tamper. How she stares at me ! Do you know me, dear Emily ?

Emily. No, sir. You have a flattering face.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

I warrant you have five hundred loves—aye, to be sure, one for every guinea in your pocket.

Tamper. Emily—dear Emily ! Ah, how poor and mean my folly now appears ! Her frenzy has restored my senses—were she perfect now, as once she was, she should be mine ; and as she is, my tears—my devotion shall wed her.

Florival. Let her alone, sir. 'Tis all too late.

Bell. She trembles—don't trouble her. She does not know you, sir.

Emily. Know him ? Not I. What then ? He's a man—he'll marry me, maybe.

Tamper. Emily—I am your betrothed—your true lover. Look at me.

Emily. My lover ? I have no lover, but I am on my knees for one night and morning to the good Saint Valentine. He's the patron saint o' maids, and doth teach them to mend their condition.

(*Sings*)—

Send me a lover, Saint Valentine.

Spring bids us to woo.

Maids in such weather should never repine,

Saint, honouring you.

I hope a rich lover may come to my door,

But, sooner than none, I'll take who is poor.

Oh, send me a lover, do,

Young, handsome, and true !

Young, handsome, and—— Oh, oh, will you not tell me where my heart lies buried ?

Tamper. Poor Emily ! Poor Emily !

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Emily. You are kind—you pity me. And yet (*shrinking from him*) are you not a soldier?

Tamper. Yes.

Emily. Have you a sweetheart?

Tamper. Yes, a very dear one.

Emily. Poor soul, I am sorry for her. I do not remember why—but—it is very sad to be a soldier's sweetheart. I think I loved a soldier once—long ago—and then——

Tamper. Yes, dear—and then——?

Emily. He killed me. I have been dead a long, long time. Did you not know? Did nobody tell you? Ah, you must not bring me roses. Violets for the dead—violets and marigolds. Roses are for a bridal.

Tamper. Yes, Emily—for your own. Look at me—come to me, Emily. Saint Valentine has sent you your lover again.

Emily. Saint Valentine—aye, but there's another verse—

Quickly departeth, Saint Valentine,

Morn's glittering hue.

Beauty and youth, when they 'gin to decline,

No charm can renew.

(*Staring wildly at Tamper*) No—charm—can—— (*Screams.*) Ah! I know you! I know you! I know you now! You are not my poor, maimed love—you are a mocking devil in his likeness—Retro me, Satanas! Demon, avaunt! (*Clings weeping to Florival.*)

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Bell. Emily, Emily ! Oh, hold her, Captain Johnson ! In these attacks she is so strong that a woman cannot control her.

Florival. Poor soul, poor soul ! Do not fear, Emily ; I am with you.

Emily (glancing at Tamper, then hiding her face). His eyes !

Bell. Don't look at them. Hold her, Captain !

Emily (more wildly). His eyes ! His eyes !

Bell. Oh, damn his eyes ! Excuse me, Colonel, but we must cover your eyes—she cannot bear to see them. Do you mind ? She may do you a mischief !

Tamper. Mind ? Of course not. Anything to calm her. (*Bell muffles his head in a shawl.*)

Bell. There, look up, dear Emily.

Emily (peeping again). His legs ! His two legs ! Oh, oh, his legs ! (*Screams loudly.*)

Bell. It's your legs now, Colonel—it's your own fault. We must hide them—or couldn't you go on all fours ?

Tamper. Yes, yes—of course. Anything !
(*He drops on all fours.*)

Bell (softly to Emily). We've got him to his knees at last, sister.

Emily. Yes, but how long can we keep him there ? He'll be furious when he gets up.

Florival. He will be—enraged !

Emily. He will ; so you had better contrive to keep out of his way. Wait in my room—

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

we can manage him more easily by our two selves.

Florival. You are sure ?

Emily. Quite sure. Run quickly. He is getting restless.

(Florival runs out, L., leaving door ajar.)

Tamper (trying to move his bandage). She seems quieter now, Miss Bell. Perhaps if I were to speak to her——

(A scream from Emily.)

Bell. No, no. Keep perfectly still, Colonel, I beg. Your bandage is slipping. Let me tie it again.

(She ties up his head still more firmly.)

Tamper. But, damn it, I can scarcely hear now——

Bell. S-sh ! *(She runs back to Emily.)* He has developed a whole series of fresh complaints since this morning, sister, hasn't he ?

Emily. Yes. Both legs seem to be affected now—and he's totally blind and almost deaf. Really, it would seem injudicious to marry one whose faculties decay so quickly.

Bell. Poor man, how hot he looks ! Would you like a drink of water, sir ?

Tamper (hopefully). Drink of what ?

Bell. Water, sir.

Tamper. Water ? Good lord, no. What the devil should I want with water ?

Bell. He refuses water ! A sure sign, sister.

Emily. Sign of what ?

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Bell (with difficulty through laughter). Hy—dro—phobia, sister !

Emily (laughing). Hydrophobia ! Of course ! And his strange attitude—crouching—just like a dog——

Bell. Hydrophobia, beyond a doubt. Hark, the door bell ! A visitor ! Sister—your hair ! *(She helps Emily to make a hasty toilette, both unable to control their laughter.)*

Tamper (straining his ears). Laughter ? Ah, the terrible laughter of the insane—sadder even than their tears ; but, damme, some one's at the door ! Miss Bell—Miss Bell ! Some one's coming. It's Belford, damme—I hear him on the stairs.

Bell (running to him). Never mind, Colonel, keep still. She is becoming calmer.

Tamper. But, damme, I don't want to be seen on all fours with my head tied up ! Belford can't keep a story to himself—it will go the round of the clubs ! Miss Bell——

(Enter Charles, R.)

Charles. Major Belford, ma'am. *(Seeing Tamper)* Oddzooks, ma'am !

Emily. I will see Major Belford. You need not wait, Charles.

Charles (still staring). N-no, ma'am. Gads my life ! *(Exit.)*

Tamper (crawling behind table). Is he here, Miss Bell ? I can hear nothing.

Bell (shouting). Just coming—keep quiet !

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

(*Enter Major Belford, R.*)

Belford. Ladies, I have but now encountered Dr. Prattle in the street, and learned the sad consequences of our foolish prank. Of my share in it, ladies, I am heartily ashamed, and have forced the Doctor to return with me and make my peace. He'll be here immediately.

Bell. We thank you, sir, but my sister's indisposition was but trifling. I fear that we have a graver problem for the physician.

(*Revealing Colonel Tamper.*)

Belford. Od so—what's that ?

Emily. Do you not recognize your friend, sir ?

Belford. Tamper ! But that's never Tamper ? Is he doing it for a wager ?

Emily. I fear not. I fear something far, far more grave. Oh, Major, he won't drink !

Belford. Won't drink ? Well, I never heard that brought against old Jack before. Won't drink ! What have you offered him ?

Emily. Water. Oh, sir, he turns from it !

Bell. That shows his madness !

Belford. On the contrary, shows his sense. What, madam, water to a soldier—to a fire-eater and a blood-drinker ! Try him with a bumper of Burgundy.

Bell. But, Major, that is not the test.

Emily. No, Major, even sane dogs won't drink Burgundy.

Belford (*puzzled*). Sane dogs ? Burgundy ? Ma'am—what are we talking about ?

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

(*Enter Dr. Prattle, R.*)

Emily. Oh, here's the Doctor. He'll explain.
(*Both ladies run to Prattle.*) Oh, Doctor, the patient——

Bell. He turns from water, Doctor——

Emily. And the Major thinks he won't turn from Burgundy——

Bell. But he says he drinks blood as a rule—— which cannot be good for him.

Emily. He says——

Prattle. Ladies, ladies, be calm, I beg. Well, well, well, what is all this? What ails us now? For every ill there's a cure, believe me, ladies. For vapours, burnt feathers; for jealousy, hartshorn in water; for grief, ratafia. If it be tight stays or corns, there's nothing like a dram of plain brandy. I feel sure there is no cause for alarm. A little patience—a little courage—— (*Tamper, crawling forward, gets between Prattle's legs.*) Good lord, what's that?

Ladies. That's the patient.

Prattle. The patient? Why—bless my soul—surely—here we have Colonel Tamper again. What's wrong with him now?

Emily. Oh, Doctor——

Bell. We fear——

Both. Hydrophobia, Doctor.

Prattle. Hydrophobia!

(*Jumps up on to a chair.*)

Belford. Hydrophobia! Good gad, ladies!

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

(Hustles ladies behind him, and draws his sword.)

Tamper! *(A pause.)* Tamper, I say——

Tamper. Is some one calling? Is she any better?

Belford. Is who any better?

Tamper. Emily, of course. Is that you, Belford? Is she calmer? Are her paroxysms abating?

Belford. Whose paroxysms? Do stand up, Tamper, and take that thing off your head.

Prattle. Pray be careful, Major; pray be careful. Humour him. He may prefer his present attitude. Poor Lord Tipple once spent hours flat on his face, under the impression that he was the stair carpet, and insisted upon our walking up and down upon him.

(Tamper has risen, and is taking off the bandage.)

Tamper. Emily! What do I see—Emily, her sweet self again? You are well, dearest—you have recovered?

Emily. I never felt better in my life, thank you, Colonel Tamper.

Tamper. Then—how——

(Bell bursts suddenly into peals of laughter.)

Prattle. Don't laugh at him, madam. Most dangerous. The old Marquis of Bedlam once bit an infant severely in the leg because it ventured to smile at him—and it was merely the wind, poor child.

Bell. I beg your pardon, Colonel, but——

(Goes into fresh convulsions.)

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Tamper (slowly). I understand. (*To Emily*) I perceive, madam, that you have made me the subject of a merry jest, and I can only hope that I have provided you with ample sport. It is not for me to question either the good feeling or the good taste of your amusing masquerade——

Emily. Truly, Colonel, I do not think it is.

Tamper. But where is that dainty whippersnapper—that Jessamy beau—that minikin Captain of no particular regiment in no ascertainable service—that Johnson? Where is he, I say? Let him stand forth and answer for himself!

Belford. Do you know to whom he refers, ladies?

Emily. All I can tell you, Major, is that I do not know any such person.

Tamper. What! you deny that you know Captain Johnson?

Emily. The name of Captain Johnson is not upon my list of acquaintances: I have never met a Captain Johnson.

Tamper (aghast). Emily! Were you a man, I should without hesitation call you a—a——

Emily. But as I am a woman, sir, I hope you will restrain yourself. And I am telling the exact truth.

Tamper. What is a man to do, Belford, when he can neither credit the evidence of his eyes, his ears, nor his intelligence?

Belford. I should say he had better put his head back into a bag and get under the table

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

again. But, my dear fellow—what is all this to-do about? Are you feeling quite yourself?

Prattle (approaching cautiously). If you will put yourself into my hands, Colonel, I feel sure these little notions of yours will quietly evaporate. General Pott—one of the Toss-Potts of Dampshire—got to the point of seeing strange and non-existent animals of most unusual tints, and I assure you, after only a fortnight's treatment, he sat calmly down upon Lady Furbelow's pet dog, under the conviction that it was an optical delusion.

Tamper (quietly). Ladies, I find that I must ask for a word or two in private with you. Belford, will you oblige me by leaving us for a few minutes, and taking that (*indicating Prattle*) with you?

Prattle. Most injudicious, Major—most injudicious, ladies. I remember the case of the young Vicomte de Tête Montée—son of the old Marquis.

Emily. I am not in the least alarmed, Doctor. Yes, Major; pray leave us—but remain within call.

Belford. I obey, madam. Come, Doctor. (*As he passes Tamper*) Tamper, for heaven's sake, try to behave yourself.

Tamper (bowing). Gentlemen. (*Exeunt Belford and Prattle, R.*) Well, ladies? (*A pause.*) I think that some explanation is due to me. I have been deceived—made to look ridiculous.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Bell. There's no doubt about that, Colonel.

Emily. Pardon me, sir, but to complain of deception comes ill from you. Out of respect to our late affection I will attempt to forget your conduct, but—everything between us is now at an end.

Tamper. You'll repent your inconstancy, Emily ; upon my soul, you will ! One more word and I am gone for ever—for ever, madam.

Bell (imitating). For ever, madam !

Tamper. Tell me then—truly—have you not received the addresses of that—of Captain Johnson ?

Emily. The person I think you mean has, I confess, honoured me with attentions, and I feel now free to respond.

Bell. Yes, Colonel ; as you are quitting her for ever—for ever, madam !

Tamper. Mightily well, ma'am. It was not then the supposed misfortunes that had befallen me, but the charms of Captain Johnson which have changed your feelings. (*His glance falls on the half-open door, L., which moves slightly.*) But stay—I fancy we are overheard. (*Opens door suddenly, discovering Florival, whom he collars and drags in.*) So, sir, you add eavesdropping to your other accomplishments !

Florival. Sir, I remained at hand in case these ladies should need help : your violence is my justification !

Tamper. So, madam, not only have you

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

allowed this gentleman to take my place, but you set him as a spy upon my actions. This, then, is your boasted affection.

Emily. And mighty proof you have given me of your own affection.

Tamper. The event, madam, has not too well warranted the experiment.

Emily. And shall justify it still more; for here—before your face—I give my hand to this gentleman, solemnly declaring that it shall never be in your power to dispel the affection formed between us.

Tamper. As to you, madam, your infidelity be your punishment. But this gentleman shall answer for his treachery here and now.

(*Draws.*)

Bell (running between them). No, no, Colonel Tamper!

Emily (doing the same). This gentleman has done you no wrong!

Tamper. Stand aside, I beg, ladies—this is a man's affair.

Florival. Sir, I—I defy you. (*Aside to Bell*) Ring the bell for heaven's sake—go on ringing! (*To Tamper*) I will defend this lady's honour with my life. (*To Emily*) Call out of the window for a constable!

Emily and Bell (screaming). Help! Help! Help!

Bell (to Florival). Hold out for one moment longer—I hear steps on the stair. Help!

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Tamper. Come, sir, defend yourself.

Florival (*listening*). Yes—some one is coming.
(*Draws sword.*) Monsieur—à vos ordres ! En garde !

(*As their swords meet, Belford and Prattle hurry in, R.*)

Florival (*dropping her sword and running to Belford*). Ah, mon George—mon George !

(*Falls half fainting into his arms.*)

Belford. Justine ! Good lord.—Justine ! What the devil are you doing, Tamper ?

(*He embraces Florival.*)

Tamper. Mind your own business, Belford !

Prattle (*staring*). He appears to me to be doing so, sir.

Belford. I am, sir. If this lady is not my business, I don't know what is.

Florival (*faintly*). Ah, save me, mon George !

Belford. Save you—of course I'll save you. 'Pon my soul, Tamper, I don't know what's come to you ! First I find you sprawling about on all fours with your head in a bag, and now—here you are trying to run a lady through the gizzard !

Tamper (*horrified*). A lady !

Florival (*modestly*). You see, mon George, I am not altogether a lady at present.

Belford. My dear Justine, what you are doing here, and why you are doing it in breeches, I don't know—unless it's because you look damn fine in 'em, begad ! But only a born fool would take you for a man.

ACT II.] THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

Bell. That's just what a born fool has done, Major.

Belford. Miss Bell, if you'll pardon my saying so, I don't think you'll get married. We men don't like to hear the truth about ourselves expressed quite so clearly. But, 'pon my soul, Tamper, you should take yourself in hand. You can't run round the town sticking ladies—why, the deuce is in you !

Bell. Yes, the deuce is in him.

Prattle. The deuce is in him ! Major, I believe that your diagnosis is perfectly correct. This is a clear instance of Demoniactal Possession !

Tamper. In that case, Prattle, it's a parson I want, not a doctor ; so we need not detain you.

Prattle. A parson—yes—yes—of course. The dear Bishop—only a few doors off—I can get him round in a minute—though I'm afraid he's sickening for the smallpox.

Bell. Good heavens, don't bring him here ; I prefer the devil—don't you, Emily ?

Emily. Infinitely. But if Colonel Tamper will relieve us of his company, his Satanic Majesty will doubtless go with him.

Tamper. I am gone, madam. Deceived and ridiculed—I am gone, so help me, for ever—never to return.

Belford. How's this ? Going in a passion ? Stay, Tamper. It seems to me that you owe at least an apology to Mademoiselle Florival.

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Tamper. Confusion ! My rival a woman ! I begin to perceive that I have been very ridiculous.

Bell. You will not require spectacles for that, Colonel.

Tamper. But I do not understand——

Emily. What *I* do not understand is why Mademoiselle Florival, who met Major Belford for the first time three minutes ago, is now reclining in his arms and calling him George.

Florival. But, madam, he is my wounded hero of Belleisle—he is my betrothed !

Belford. What wonder has brought you here, Justine, and in this habit ?

Florival. Ah, mon George, I have much to relate. Be patient—I will tell you all.

Bell. I shouldn't do that, dear ; it's never very wise.

Belford. But you are here—no matter how. Well, Tamper, am I not a lucky fellow ?

Tamper. Oh, Belford, I am the most miserable dog alive !

Belford. What, you are on your legs again, I see. Prattle told me that he had blown you up and discovered your imposture to the ladies.

Tamper. What ! Did that coxcomb betray me ?

Prattle (*edging away*). Betray ! Oh fie, Colonel ; you know me better, I hope. (*Softly*) Humour him, ladies. I assure you, Colonel——

ACT II.] 'THE DEUCE IS IN HIM

(*Softly*) Humour him, sir. I am as close as oak, an absolute freemason for secrecy !

Tamper. You are a miserable, prating popin-jay—a disgrace to your profession !

Prattle. Yes, Colonel, yes—yes—quite so. (*Softly*) Humour him, ladies. I must bid you farewell, I fear. (*Edging to door*) Lady Fanny Foible will be in strong hysterics if I delay, and—— Yes, Colonel, I'm going. Humour him, I beg of you. Ladies, I must humbly take my—— Yes, Colonel—I—I'm going. (*Runs out, R.*)

Tamper. Miserable fool ! This explains all. Ah, Belford, I am ruined past redemption. I have behaved most extravagantly both to Emily and to your lady. I can never look them in the face again.

Belford. Did I not tell you that you would expose yourself confoundedly ? However, my Justine shall be our advocate for you, and I hope you may be taken again into favour.

Emily. Does he deserve it, Major ?

Belford. Why, madam, I can't say much for him—nor for myself neither, i' faith. We must rely entirely upon your goodness.

Florival. Come, madam, pity the poor man and admit him again to your good graces. He is a true penitent—ah, I can see it.

Emily. Well, if I can realize that he is heartily repentant, I am half inclined to pity him.

Tamper (embracing her). My generous Emily !

THE DEUCE IS IN HIM [ACT II.

Emily (laughing). You provoking wretch—it's more than you deserve.

Belford. Well, Colonel, do you still think that Miss Emily ought to prefer you to all the rest of mankind ?

Tamper. No, I don't, Major ; but—(*taking Emily's hand*)—I hope she will.

Bell. And you, sister. Is your love for the Colonel still entirely pure and disinterested ?

Emily. No, sister, it isn't. It's entirely selfish. I am very much interested in him, and I want him all to myself.

Bell. Then I think you both run a chance of coming to a good mutual understanding. But remember, sister—the deuce is in him.

All (laughing). The deuce is in him !

CURTAIN

CAST

MEN

TAMPER	
BELFORD	
PRATTLE	
CHARLES	

WOMEN

EMILY	
BELL	
MADemoisELLE DE FLORIVAL	

If there is a shortage of actors, Charles may be turned into a maid.

Tamper's appearance minus a leg presents no difficulty in such a purely farcical play: his knee is strapped into the socket of his wooden peg, and his leg strapped up and hidden, more or less, by the skirts of his long coat. But rehearsal is necessary!

In a small reading circle Dr. Prattle may read the part of Charles, and also, if necessary, that of Mademoiselle de Florival. No further reduction is possible without clashing.





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PR
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p4

Colson, George
The dove is in his

